Motor Racing / Vince Kowalick

Krieger Treads Saugus Suspension for Illegal Use of Street Stock Tire

Larry Krieger, where were you the night of July 2?

After receiving a one-week suspension for racing with an illegal tire last Saturday night at Saugus Speedway, Krieger, Saugus' Hobby Stock division points leader, probably wishes he had stayed home and left his car in the garage.

"As far as I'm concerned," Krieger said after the races, "I wasn't even here tonight."

Not so, say Saugus track officials. Let the record reflect that Krieger, a Reseda resident, was indeed racing at Saugus on the night in question and that he enjoyed a successful outing—until officials examined the tread of one of his front tires.

Krieger finished second in both the oval and figure 8 main events and won the figure 8 trophy dash and a figure 8 heat race. And for a while afterward, it appeared Krieger would be awarded victories in both main events courtesy of track officials.

Allen Boles of San Fernando, winner of the 20-lap oval main event, and Joe Barreras Jr. of Canyon Country, winner of the 15-lap figure 8, were disqualified for racing with illegal tires. "They were running Street Stock tires," Saugus technical director Tony Famularo explained after the race.

The tires that were found to be unacceptable are considered racing tires, which are prohibited in Hobby Stock events.

Krieger signed autographs for young fans and reluctantly celebrated the wins—the fifth time this season he would have swept both main events. "It's not as good a feeling as going through the checkered flag," he said.

The court of inquiry, however, had not yet been adjourned. Upon brief examination of Krieger's tire and a 25-minute meeting of officials behind closed doors, the 22-year-old points leader and last season's Hobby Stock rookie of the year also was disqualified.

Larry Krieger, how do you plead?

"One side of me feels guilty. . . . actually, no, I'm mad," he said. "I'm not happy about being suspended at all. That was not a $100 racing tire out there."

Guilty as charged. "He had the same problem with one of his tires as the others did," Famularo said. "It was too soft."

Lawrence Leis of Canyon Country and Rick Crow of Canyon Country, third-place finishers in the oval and figure 8, respectively, were awarded wins. Boles and Barreras each received four-week suspensions.

"Those guys would have won those races if they had those tires or not," Krieger said.

Immaterial, according to Saugus promoter Ray Wilkings. "The rule is to protect everybody," he said. The point of the tire ruling, Wilkings said, is to keep Hobby Stock drivers at an even level.

"A lot of guys are out there for fun, putting together junkers and racing for trophies, not money," Wilkings said. "We have plenty of other opportunities for guys who want to spend money on racing, like Modified and Street Stock divisions."

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Add Krieger: Krieger would seem to be the least likely driver at Saugus to be disqualified for a violation. Yet. . . .

Krieger, with 97 points entering last Saturday night's program, is far ahead of the pack in the Hobby Stock Saturday night point standings. "I could afford to sit out the rest of the year and still win," he said. Jay Slaughter of West Hills is second with 63 points.

Krieger's lead in the Friday night oval standings, however, is not luxurious. With 160 points, Krieger holds a slim lead over Leis and could be hurt by his suspension.

In the figure 8, Krieger, with 215 points, leads James Kusch of Sepulveda, who has 144.

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Go-getter: Tracy Lee Nunes of Reseda is the first—and only—female to race the figure 8 main event at Saugus Speedway. Although Nunes has finished no better than sixth in the dangerous 15-lap race, she is not discouraged.

"I always manage to push my way through," she said.

And she manages to ignore those who don't appreciate her participation. Some drivers, Nunes says, treat her like, well, a "woman driver."

"Most of the guys are kind of rough on the girls who come out to Saugus," Nunes said. "They try to scare them away. But I love race-car driving and I always wanted to do figure 8."

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Gaining strength: Van Nuys stock-car driver Jim Robinson, who was in a coma for four months following a serious crash in February at Phoenix International Raceway, has shown signs of improvement.

Robinson, who remains in Rancho Los Amigos Hospital in Downey, reportedly has been able to recognize family members and respond to instructions.

"He's real alert," said Rick McNeil, manager of Robinson's automotive shop in North Hollywood. "He shows pain and he seems to show when he's happy. Every time I go down to see him he seems to be getting better."

A trust fund has been organized to help pay Robinson's medical expenses. Those interested may send donations to: Jim Robinson Family Trust Fund, c/o American Pacific State Bank, 6350 Laurel Canyon, N. Hollywood, 91606.